

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

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INFO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 PARIS 04885

LIMDIS

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, US, UR

SUBJECT: SOVIET AMBASSADOR CHERVONENKO'S CALL ON

AMBASSADOR RUSH

SUMMARY. CHERVONENKO'S RETURN CALL ON ME FEBRUARY 24 DEVELOPED INTO AN 80-MINUTE DISCUSSION, CENTERING ON THE MIDDLE EAST WHILE TOUCHING ON US-SOVIET RELATIONS, SALT, CSCE AND PRIME MINISTER CHIRAC'S USSR VISIT. ON THE MIDDLE EAST, THE SOVIET AMBASSADOR EXPRESSED HOPES: (A) FOR "SOMETHING CLOSE TO COORDINATION" BETWEEN OUR TWO COUNTRIES; (B) THAT THE SECRETARY'S TRIP TO THE AREA IN MARCH WILL FURTHER CLARIFY THE SITUATION; AND (C) THAT THE SECRETARY WILL NOT STOP HALFWAY. CHERVONENKO NOTED THAT THE SOVIETS EXPECT GREAT RESULTS FROM BREZHNEV'S VISIT TO THE US LATER THIS YEAR, AND LOOK WITH OPTIMISM AT THE FUTURE OF US-SOVIET RELATIONS. HE ALSO MADE A STRONG PITCH FOR A RAPID CONCLUSION TO CSCE. END SUMMARY.

1. MIDDLE EAST. NOTING THAT THE MIDDLE EAST REMAINS A DANGEROUS THREAT TO WORLD PEACE, I STRESSED THAT THE USG IS BY NO MEANS UNWILLING TO HAVE THE USSR PLAY A
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MAJOR ROLE IN SETTLEMENT EFFORTS. OUR STEP-BY-STEP

DIPLOMACY AIMS TO BRING ABOUT SOME WITHDRAWAL AND OTHER TANGIBLE PROGRESS, SO THAT THE GENEVA CONFERENCE CAN BE RECONVENED WITH BETTER CHANCES FOR SUCCESS.

2. CHERVONENKO COMMENTED THAT THE MIDDLE EAST SITUATION REMAINS DIFFICULT BUT IS NOT WITHOUT HOPE. GROMYKO FELT THAT THE SECRETARY'S VISIT TO THE AREA WOULD HELP PUSH THINGS TOWARD A SITUATION MORE SATISFACTORY TO ALL INTERESTED COUNTRIES. THE USSR HAS NO INTENTION OF SEEKING A MIDDLE EAST SOLUTION WITHOUT CONSULTING WITH THE US. MOSCOW VALUES HIGHLY US EFFORTS TO LOCALIZE THE PROBLEM. SEPARATE DECISIONS BY ANY OF THE INTERESTED PARTIES WOULD BE VERY DANGEROUS. THE MIDDLE EAST REMAINS A POWDER KEG, AND THE PROBLEM MUST BE MET WITHOUT DELAY.

3. AMBASSADOR CHERVONENKO THEN SAID HE HAS HAD NO INFORMATION YET ON GROMYKO'S TALKS WITH THE SECRETARY. HE ASKED WHETHER THEY AGREED ON A TIME TO RECONVENE THE GENEVA CONFERENCE, AND ON THE PARTICIPANTS. I REPLIED THAT I WOULD LIMIT MYSELF TO A GENERAL OBSERVATION. OBVIOUSLY GROMYKO AND THE SECRETARY MAY NOT HAVE BEEN IN COMPLETE ACCORD AT GENEVA. BUT EACH HAS HAD LONG EXPERIENCE IN NEGOTIATING WITH THE OTHER, AND THE MEETINGS WERE DOUBTLESS HELPFUL AND CONSTRUCTIVE.

4. CHERVONENKO ASKED WHETHER THE FRENCH HAVE GIVEN ME ANY CONCRETE INDICATIONS OF HOW THEY WANT TO PARTICIPATE IN THE SETTLEMENT PROCESS. I SAID THAT THEY HAVE NOT ELABORATED BEYOND A GENERAL STATEMENT OF THEIR POSITION, WHICH IS WELL KNOWN.

5. THE SOVIET AMBASSADOR RAISED THE PALESTINIAN ISSUE IN A GENERAL WAY. I NOTED THAT WHILE I COULD SEE THE NEED FOR THE PALESTINIANS TO HAVE A STATE OF THEIR OWN, I COULD ALSO SEE THE DIFFICULTIES IN CREATING SUCH A STATE. THE ISRAELIS HAVE SAID THEY WILL NOT PARTICIPATE AT GENEVA WITH THE PLO.

6. CHERVONENKO SAID THE SOVIETS HOPE THAT SECRETARY
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KISSINGER'S VISIT TO THE MIDDLE EAST IN MARCH WILL FURTHER CLARIFY THE SITUATION. MOSCOW HOPES THAT HE WILL NOT STOP HALFWAY. THE USSR HOPES FOR -- HE SAID HE SUPPOSED HE COULD NOT USE THE WORD "COORDINATION" -- BUT HOPES FOR "SOMETHING CLOSE TO COORDINATION" BETWEEN OUR TWO COUNTRIES ON THE MIDDLE EAST. WE AGREED THAT IT IS IN NO ONE'S INTEREST TO ALLOW THE SITUATION TO FESTER; THIS COULD LEAD TO ANOTHER WAR.

7. US-SOVIET RELATIONS; SALT. CHERVONENKO SAID THAT THE SOVIETS EXPECT GREAT RESULTS FROM BREZHNEV'S OFFICIAL VISIT TO THE US LATER THIS YEAR. THIS WILL BE

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 PARIS 04885

LIMDIS

THE NEXT MAJOR STEP IN THE EVOLUTION OF OUR RELATIONS. A FURTHER AGREEMENT ON SALT IS VITAL FOR BOTH OUR COUNTRIES AND FOR THE WHOLE PROCESS OF DETENTE. MUCH WAS ACHIEVED WHILE PRESIDENT NIXON WAS IN OFFICE; MUCH IS BEING ACCOMPLISHED NOW WITH PRESIDENT FORD. MOSCOW LOOKS WITH OPTIMISM AT THE FUTURE OF US-SOVIET RELATIONS.

8. I TOLD CHERVONENKO I AGREE WITH HIM AND WITH BREZHNEV THAT THE PROCESS OF DETENTE IS IRREVERSIBLE. WE ARE TOGETHER ON THE ONLY ROAD ALONG WHICH WE CAN TRAVEL. WE ACHIEVED MAJOR PROGRESS AT VLADIVOSTOK. WE LOOK FORWARD TO BOTH SIDES WORKING OUT CONCRETELY THE PRINCIPLES AGREED TO AT VLADIVOSTOK, AND HAVING THIS PROCESS RESULT IN A SALT AGREEMENT BEFORE BREZHNEV'S VISIT TO THE US. I SAID I PERSONALLY CONSIDER SALT MORE VITAL THAN ANYTHING ELSE. OTHERWISE BOTH COUNTRIES WILL WASTE ENORMOUS RESOURCES IN A

SPIRALLING ARMS RACE. WE MUST ALSO WORK TO GET OTHER COUNTRIES TO ADHERE TO NPT AND AVOID A NUCLEAR RACE INVOLVING SMALLER POWERS.

9. TRADE, I CONTINUED, IS ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT ELEMENTS OF GOOD RELATIONS AMONG NATIONS. IF THE US
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AND THE USSR CAN HAVE GOOD COMMERCIAL RELATIONS, IT WILL BENEFIT NOT ONLY BOTH OF US BUT THE WHOLE WORLD. THIS IS WHY I PERSONALLY REGRET SUCH RECENT MISUNDERSTANDINGS AS THE JACKSON AMENDMENT AND THE EXPORT-IMPORT BANK CREDIT LIMITATION -- MISUNDERSTANDINGS, PARTLY THE RESULT OF OUR POLITICAL PROCESS, WHICH WE ARE WORKING HARD TO TRY TO CORRECT.

10. CSCE. CHERVONENKO RAISED CSCE AND NOTED THAT THINGS ARE MOVING VERY SLOWLY AT GENEVA. ALL THE MAJOR STATES PROFESS TO BE IN FAVOR OF A RAPID CONCLUSION. THE US HAS INDICATED IT IS NOT AGAINST FINISHING UP THE WORK IN APRIL OR MAY. THERE IS NO REASON FOR FURTHER DELAY, SINCE AGREEMENT HAS ALREADY BEEN REACHED ON THE MAJOR POINTS. WHEN CSCE QUESTIONS ARE DISCUSSED IN THE VARIOUS CAPITALS' THINGS ARE CLEAR. BUT IN GENEVA THERE ARE CLOUDS, FOG, AND NO DISCERNIBLE PROGRESS -- NO FEELING THAT THE STATES ARE READY TO MOVE TO A STAGE III CONCLUSION. WHY?

11. I REPLIED THAT BOTH CSCE AND MBFR SEEM TO BE MOVING SLOWLY. WE CANNOT EXPECT RAPID PROGRESS ON MBFR, GIVEN THE VERY COMPLEX ISSUES. BUT ON CSCE, WITH SO MANY OF THE IMPORTANT ISSUES AGREED UPON WE SHOULD BE ABLE TO CONCLUDE THESE TALKS WITHIN A FEW MONTHS. ALL THE LEADERS OF THE MAJOR PARTICIPATING COUNTRIES WANT TO BRING THE CONFERENCE TO A REASONABLY SPEEDY CONCLUSION.

12. CHIRAC VISIT TO USSR. CHERVONENKO SAID HE WILL BE RETURNING TO MOSCOW FOR A PERIOD IN MARCH IN CONNECTION WITH THE VISIT OF PRIME MINISTER CHIRAC. THE PROGRAM FOR CHIRAC'S VISIT IS NOT YET FULLY WORKED OUT ALTHOUGH THE DATES ARE SET FROM MARCH 19 TO MARCH 24 OR 25. IT IS POSSIBLE THAT THE PRIME MINISTER WILL VISIT OTHER AREAS IN ADDITION TO MOSCOW; HE HAS EXPRESSED INTEREST IN VISITING CENTRAL ASIA AND SIBERIA. THE SOVIETS SUGGESTED THAT HE EXTEND HIS STAY FOR A FEW DAYS TO MAKE IT EASIER TO VISIT THESE DISTANT AREAS, BUT THE FRENCH SAID HE COULD NOT MAKE THE VISIT ANY LONGER.
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13. I ACCEPTED CHERVONENKO'S INVITATION TO DINNER AT THE SOVIET EMBASSY AT THE END OF MARCH OR EARLY APRIL, FOLLOWING THE CHIRAC VISIT.

14. COMMENT: I WAS STRUCK BY CHERVONENKO'S VERY FRIENDLY ATTITUDE, AND HIS DELIBERATE EFFORT TO TAKE AN OPTIMISTIC LINE ON ALL THE ISSUES DISCUSSED.
RUSH

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